

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A manually engageable control lever device for vehicles having handlebar-type steering that includes at least one handle grip and structure for mounting said device, said device comprising:

a main body mountable at the structure and adjacent to the handle grip, said main body having at least a first flare extending therefrom and adapted for secure engagement by either a user's finger or thumb to cause movement from a variety of user hand positions or angles at the handle grip once said main body is mounted, said main body configured so that said flare is oriented convergently relative to the handle grip once said main body is mounted, with a substantial but variable space defined between said flare and the handle grip during operation of said device.

2. The device of claim 1 wherein said main body includes a second flare extending from a central portion of said main body opposite said central portion from said first flare and adapted for secure engagement by either a user's finger or thumb to cause movement.

3. The device of claim 1 wherein said first flare has a length and wherein said main body has an overall length exceeding said length of said first flare.

4. The device of claim 3 wherein said main body has opposite ends, and wherein said first flare is positioned along said main body length intermediate said ends of said main body.

5. The device of claim 4 wherein said main body includes a second flare extending from a central portion of said main body intermediate said ends and opposite said central portion from said first flare, and wherein said second flare and one of said ends of said main body are adapted for secure manual engagement to cause movement.

6. The device of claim 1 wherein said first flare of said main body defines a surface area characteristic including a digitally engageable cradle and a digitally engagable extension surface.

7. The device of claim 1 wherein said main body includes pivot connecting structure for pivotable connection of said main body to the structure.

8. The device of claim 7 wherein the vehicles are snowmobiles and wherein said main body includes engageable structure for actuator connection with said main body.

9. A device for modifying a manually accessible surface area of a motorized vehicle control lever having a distal end and movable toward and away from a handle grip of the motorized vehicle in a plane defined between the handle grip and the control lever, said device comprising a main body including a portion adapted to be mounted at the control lever, a first flare extending from said portion and adapted for secure engagement by either a user's finger or thumb for lever movement from a variety of user hand positions or angles once said device is mounted, said portion of said main body contoured to fit the control lever so that said flare extends in a direction substantially normal to the plane of control lever movement.

10. The device of claim 9 wherein said portion of said main body is of a length selected so that the distal end of the control lever remains manually engageable after said device is mounted.

11. The device of claim 9 wherein said main body includes a second flare extending from said portion opposite said portion from said first flare and adapted for secure manual engagement by a user.

12. The device of claim 9 wherein said first flare and said portion of said main body define a surface area characteristic including a digitally engageable cradle and a digitally engagable extension surface.

13. The device of claim 9 further comprising a mounting unit, and wherein said portion includes an engageable structure for receiving said mounting unit.

14. A method of modification of a digitally accessible surface of a manual control lever for a vehicle having handlebar-type steering that includes at least one handle grip, the lever having a distal end and movable, when mounted, toward and away from the handle grip in a plane defined between the handle grip and the control lever, the method comprising the steps of:

defining at least first and second areas of the digitally accessible surface of the control lever; and

extending at least one of said areas of the digitally engagable surface of the control lever in a direction substantially normal to the plane of control lever movement.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the step of defining includes defining a third area, and wherein the step of extending includes extending at least two of said areas in said direction.

16. The method of claim 15 further comprising the step of leaving the distal end of the control lever digitally accessible between said at least two areas.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising establishing a cradle between said areas.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising practicing said method with either one of an original equipment control lever or a replacement control lever for the vehicle.

19. The method of claim 14 further comprising practicing said method with a control lever already mounted at the vehicle.